

LEADERSHIP PHILOSOPHY

of

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I can spell out my philosophy of who and what we must be as leaders using the word DEVELOP. Each letter stands for an individual precept that, when combined, define our ultimate responsibility. The NCO Corps is in a state of perpetual regeneration. We are the sole source of our own replacements. The leaders we develop today will be developing the next generation of leaders. Our actions are shaping the Army of the future.

Develop: Develop yourself and develop your Soldiers. Self development is critical, but it is not enough for you to be proficient and successful; you must raise your subordinate leaders and Soldiers to be proficient and successful. The true measure of our success as leaders is not our own accomplishments, but the accomplishments (and failures) of our Soldiers and our units. Counseling is one of our best development tools. We must be diligent in conducting written, verbal, professional development, performance, disciplinary, and positive counseling.

Educate and Enable: Teach and develop tactical knowledge, technical skill, and use of available systems. NCOES is a priority. Wartime deployments and extreme personal emergencies are the only things that should preclude it. Encourage and facilitate the use of online training tools, correspondence courses, distance learning, and participation in civilian education. Begin teaching the importance of military history early to establish the significance and value. Enable subordinates by giving them the authority and responsibility to use their knowledge and skills. They must also have the tools and equipment required to execute. Maintenance is critical to success. We have to instill the importance of maintenance and care of equipment. We cannot defend ourselves with inoperable weapons, nor reach the objective in dead-lined vehicles.

Values: Army Values and leadership attributes equal strength of character. Leaders must uphold high ethical standards by embodying the Army Values. If you ever find yourself facing an ethical dilemma, do not be afraid to seek guidance or assistance. No one Army Value is more important than the others, but to me, integrity is the foundation. Instill the significance and value of tradition, customs, courtesies, and history.

Empower: Give your subordinates responsibility. Give them their missions and guidance, then let them execute. Mistakes will happen as they develop. Allow them to make mistakes and then let them be part of developing corrective actions and solutions to prevent recurrence. Teach all Soldiers where they fit in the unit structure and what their responsibilities are. Instill the mindset that at any given time, they may need to take charge and execute in the absence, or loss, of their first line leader. By giving subordinates responsibility and holding them accountable, they begin developing problem solving skills. We should evaluate our effectiveness as leaders based on how our subordinates perform when we are not there guiding their every action.

Lead: NCOs must lead; that is what we do. The NCO Creed clearly defines this for us and we must live the Creed. We are not leaders just because we memorize the words, we are leaders when fully understand every tenet of the Creed and ensure all actions we take are in keeping with it. If you can weigh your actions against the Creed and they balance, drive on. If not, reassess yourself and adjust accordingly. Leading is not just issuing orders. We must know our Soldiers (their strengths, weaknesses, personal struggles, goals...) and take care of them and their families. Families are members of the unit and our leadership responsibility extends to them. We must keep our Soldiers and families informed. Although it is not always easy, we must balance the mission and the welfare of our Soldiers.

Ownership: Take ownership of your unit and your Soldiers. Teach subordinates to take ownership of their role in the unit and mission. You must involve yourself in your area of responsibility, where subordinate leaders and Soldiers are training for and executing the mission, in order to own it. Participate in training with your Soldiers in the same uniform, to the same standard. This is the best way to reinforce the importance of training while earning their respect. Be active in the unit's daily business; training, maintenance, and mission operations. A leader's presence reinforces the significance of what they are doing. Be there to mentor, provide guidance, and make corrections when needed, but let them do it (empower).

Professionalism: Be professional at all times. We live in an imperfect world and there is no such thing as "zero defects", however, we have a professional obligation to do our best to achieve or exceed every standard, every time. Professional leaders do not gripe about what is wrong, they seek solutions to make things better. Our actions as leaders have a much greater impact on our Soldiers than our words. The most effective units train, deploy, fight, eat and laugh together, as a team with equal respect for all members. But we must remember that we are not their friends, we are their leaders. We need to be able to relate to our Soldier on a personal level. This builds cohesion and trust, but we must not cross the line into undue familiarity.

"As a leader... you are not given authority, status and position as a personal reward to enjoy in comfort. You are given them so that you may be of greater service to your subordinates, your unit, and your country." FM 22-100, Army Leadership (1983)



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